

Message Text

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ACTION OES-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-07 FEAE-00 AF-06

ARA-10 NEA-10 COME-00 PM-03 H-02 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 /143 W

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R 161755Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2012

INFO USIA WASHDC

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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UNCLAS LONDON 09194

DEPARTMENT PASS TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM. UK

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ACTIVITIES IN
FIELD OF NON-PROLIFERATION

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF AN ARTICLE BY PAUL LEWIS IN THE
FINANCIAL TIMES OF JUNE 15:

U.S. BID FOR NEW NUCLEAR CONTROLS - THE U.S. IS NOW
ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE NEW SAFEGUARDS ON THE SALE OF
CIVILIAN NUCLEAR PLANTS WITH BRITAIN AND OTHER NUCLEAR
EXPORTING COUNTRIES, IN ORDER TO PREVENT THIRD NATIONS
FROM BUILDING ATOMIC WEAPONS OF THEIR OWN.

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IN PARTICULAR, THE U.S. WANTS TO BAN OR TIGHTLY CON-

TROL THE SALE OF URANIUM ENRICHMENT AND FUEL REPROCESSING PLANTS, WHICH CAN PROVIDE THE PURCHASING COUNTRY WITH A SOURCE OF FISSILE MATERIAL SUITABLE FOR USE IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

AS PART OF THIS PLAN, IT HAS SUGGESTED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SERIES OF REGIONAL PLANTS AROUND THE WORLD FOR THE REPROCESSING OF FUEL FROM CIVILIAN REACTORS. THESE WOULD BE UNDER INTERNATIONAL CONTROL AND WOULD KEEP A TIGHT CHECK ON THE PLUTONIUM AND OTHER FISSILE MATERIAL PRODUCED IN THE OPERATION. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOME DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THIS SCHEME WOULD BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH WHICH SEEMS TO BE PREFERRED BY THE BRITISH IS FOR COUNTRIES EXPORTING NUCLEAR REACTORS TO UNDERTAKE TO DO THE FUEL REPROCESSING THEMSELVES.

AMERICAN CONCERN ABOUT THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY PARTICULARLY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD, HAS GREATLY INCREASED SINCE THE INDIAN EXPLOSION LAST YEAR. BUT IT HAS BEEN GIVEN NEW IMPETUS BY THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO SELL BRAZIL NOT ONLY NUCLEAR REACTORS, BUT ALSO THE ENRICHMENT AND FUEL PROCESSING PLANTS AS WELL.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE PLANT AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE COMPLETE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE HAS GOT INTO THE POSSESSION OF A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY AND ALTHOUGH THE GERMANS CLAIM THEY WILL HAVE ADEQUATE CONTROL OVER THE USE MADE OF IT, THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS VERY ANGRY ABOUT THE SALE.

THE SOUTH AFRICANS ALREADY HAVE A SMALL ENRICHMENT PLANT OF THEIR OWN AND ACCORDING TO SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF OF CONNECTICUT, AN UNNAMED FRENCH COMPANY IS NEGOTIATING TO SELL SIMILAR EQUIPMENT TO THE ARGENTINE, SOUTH KOREA, TAIWAN AND PAKISTAN.

BESIDES THE U.K., THE U.S. IS ALSO DISCUSSING THE NEW SAFEGUARDS WITH FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, CANADA AND SOME UNCLASSIFIED

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OTHER COUNTRIES CAPABLE OF EXPORTING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. THE INCLUSION OF FRANCE IN THE NEGOTIATION IS REGARDED AS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT, SINCE IT HAS NEVER SIGNED THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND HAS CONSTANTLY TAKEN AN INDEPENDENT LINE ON ARMS CONTROL QUESTIONS.

IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE U.S. SEEMS TO BE AIMING FOR A GENERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MAJOR NUCLEAR

EXPORTING NATIONS THAT WOULD BE WORKED OUT IN PRIVATE
BETWEEN THEM. BUT IN TIME THIS COULD BE INCORPORATED
INTO A FORMAL TREATY AND INCLUDED IN THE EXISTING
REGULATIONS ON THE SALE AND HANDLING OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL
ADMINISTERED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
IN VIENNA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, NONPROLIFERATION AGREEMENTS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON09194
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750209-0625
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750647/aaaabqtv.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAR 2003 by PhilliR0>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE ON U.S. ACTIVITIES IN FIELD OF NON-PROLIFERATION
TAGS: PARM, UK, US, NRC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006